



To that end, she announced the creation of a special nine-member task force, called the Puget Sound Partnership, to set goals, benchmarks and timetables for the recovery plan. Members include elected officials and representatives of state business, agriculture, shellfish, environmental advocacy and tribal groups. The panel's report is due in October.

U.S. Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Belfair), who has spearheaded Hood Canal revival efforts and will serve on the Partnership, said he expects Gregoire's announcement will become a "turning point for Puget Sound and the Hood Canal."

He said the conservation of the Sound merits the kind of national attention paid to the restoration of the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay, where significant amounts of federal money have been allocated.

As for Gregoire's immediate spending plan, about half the money – \$21.6 million – would be used to speed cleanup of contaminated sediments. Another \$1.9 million would pay for oil spill prevention materials and response.

The plan also includes money to restore estuaries and salmon habitat; replace failing wastewater treatment systems at six state parks; lend homeowners money to replace failing septic systems; remove creosote-treated logs; and help local governments reduce stormwater runoff.

Gregoire said the region's booming human population is one reason the Sound is suffering.

Some environmental activists say what's needed is a curb on development to ensure conservation. But Gregoire said she's reluctant to force new regulations on people who haven't yet been enlisted in the effort to save the Sound.

"We could do a lot of mandates and get a lot of push back or come together and figure out the right thing to do," she said.

Billy Frank Jr., a Nisqually Indian who is chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, is among Gregoire's Puget Sound Partnership appointees. In echoing Gregoire's call for attention to the Sound's needs, he compared it to the nest of a pair of eagles that live near his home.

"This Puget Sound is our nest, all of our nests, and it's asking for help right now," Frank said.

Gregoire also asked Bill Ruckelshaus, the former Environmental Protection Agency administrator and chairman of the state Salmon Recovery Board, to serve on the task force. He commended her initiative.

"Too many measures of Puget Sound's health point in the wrong direction," he said. It will continue to deteriorate, "if we don't manage growth in an intelligent way."

Ruckelshaus also said he believes lessons can be learned from failed efforts to heal the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Florida's Everglades and San Francisco Bay.

A permanent solution for the Sound will likely entail decades of effort, he said. "In short, it will take a miracle," he said. "But the miracle that is Puget Sound demands one."

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#### What's next

- Gov. Christine Gregoire presents her spending plan to the Legislature, which convenes Jan. 9.
- A new commission, the Puget Sound Partnership, begins meeting in January to come with a plan to recover health of Puget Sound by 2020.
- Gregoire wants the plan submitted to her by October.


#### About the proposal

- An additional \$42 million by mid-2007 would clean up portions of the Puget Sound and prevent future oil spills and pollution.
- Most would come from taxes on hazardous substances under the state's Model Toxics Control Act; oil refineries account for most of it.
- A committee called the Puget Sound Partnership would map out a plan to make the Sound healthy by 2020.

#### Members of Puget Sound Partnership

- William Ruckelshaus, former federal Environmental Protection Agency administrator and Salmon Recovery Board chairman
- U.S. Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Belfair)
- Billy Frank Jr., Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
- Colin Moseley, Simpson Resource Co. chairman and chairman of the Washington Business Roundtable
- Ron Sims, King County executive
- Mark Emmert, University of Washington president
- Mike Shelby, Western Washington Agricultural Association executive director
- Bill Taylor, Taylor Shellfish Farms vice president
- Kathy Fletcher, People for Puget Sound executive director



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